

83 percent of teenagers fall victim to some kind of violence during their lives

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teenagers concludes that 83% of them claim to have fallen victim to at least one form of violence over the course of their lives; 68.6% in the last year.

Children and teens can fall prey to the same kinds of [victimisation](#) as adults - wars, hold-ups and attacks - but also some child-specific risks, such as negligence, sexual abuse and abduction, among others. Thus, the scientific literature shows that this group is more vulnerable to violence and its negative repercussions.

Now, a new research project establishes how frequently the Spanish population endures violence throughout [childhood](#), given the lack of data obtained from children's own reports.

As Noemí Pereda, the main author of this study and a researcher at the University of Barcelona, explains to SINC: "Establishing the incidence of victimisation of the youngest groups is a pressing need in Spain, as the studies carried out so far have largely focused on surveys targeted towards adult age brackets or have used statistics obtained from official organisations."

The project relies on a sample of 1,107 Spanish adolescents (590 boys and 517 girls) chosen randomly at seven secondary education establishments. Their ages varied from 12 to 17 and they were asked to respond to the Juvenile Victimisation Questionnaire.

The questionnaire covers six victimisation modules: violence by common crimes (theft, robbery, vandalism), at the hands of carers (physical or [emotional abuse](#), parental child abduction), peers and siblings (bullying at school, partner abuse), sexual (sexual abuse/aggression, indecent exposure), exposure to violence (between parents, from parents to siblings, community violence and cyber (bullying, sexual propositioning)).

The results, published in the journal '*Child Abuse & Neglect*', reveal that 83% of teenagers claimed to have fallen victim to at least one of the forms of violence assessed over the course of their lifetimes, and 68.6% had endured this in the last year.

61.5% of the [young people](#) surveyed claimed to have fallen prey to common crimes in their lifetimes, which makes this the most frequent form of victimisation. Victimisation at the hands of carers affected 25.3% of them over their lifetimes.

48.8% suffered victimisation from their peers or siblings and 8.7% endured sexual violence.

Finally, 12.6% of the young people were victims of cyber-bullying.

"Victimisation of young people in Spain is more frequent than would be predicted and alerts us to a serious social problem that we should try to prevent in order to avoid future difficulties in these children's development," Pereda adds. "These same results have been found in countries that have applied this methodology based on information supplied by minors themselves."

Gender differences

Significant differences were found in the forms of violence endured by boys and girls over their lives. Young males fall victim to more common crimes (68% of them have faced such crimes), whilst girls undergo more cases of emotional abuse at the hands of carers (23%), sexual victimisation (13.9%) and cyber-bullying.

"The study is an innovative approximation to the extent of child and youth victimisation in Spain. For the first time in Spain teenagers have been asked about multiple experiences of violence using a self-report

tool, following the same methodology as other studies in Europe, such as in Finland and the United Kingdom," the expert comments.

Nearly 20% of these young people were considered poly-victims when the events of the last year were considered.

"These young people need to be identified in order to find out how living through multiple forms of violence over their childhoods has affected their development. At the same time, they should be offered resources to prevent them from accepting [violence](#) in their relation to others and to assist them in assuring the wellbeing every child and teenager needs in order to become a healthy, assimilated citizen," Pereda concludes.

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